FREE TRADE AND WOMEN IN BRITISH COLUMBIA: POTENTIAL IMPACT AND POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study addresses the potential impact of the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on women in British Columbia. Information for the study was collected from government statistics, a review of relevant literature, and interviews with 39 representatives of B.C. business and labour groups.

WOMEN IN THE BRITISH COLUMBIA LABOUR MARKET

Government statistics indicate that women have a different labour force profile than do men. More women than men are part time workers; women tend to have held their jobs for a shorter period of time; and women workers earn, on average, two-thirds of the amount earned by men workers.

Close to 90 per cent of women workers are employed in the service producing sectors of the economy, and more than half work in clerical or service occupations. Those who work in the goods producing sectors are concentrated in trade sensitive areas such as food processing, clothing and textile manufacturing, and electronics assembly. Women workers, in general, are concentrated in jobs with lower pay, skill and responsibility levels.

BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES

In general, literature originating in, and respondents from, the business sector predict that positive impacts of the Free Trade Agreement will greatly outweigh any negative impacts. Business looks forward to modest, but significant, economic growth in which women will participate as workers and as consumers. Business respondents expect that those who already market successfully in the United States will continue to do so, aided by a simplification of import procedures and the removal of tariffs. They do not expect that American imports will out-compete Canadian products in the British Columbia market. They expect neither a major job loss nor a great job gain. Nor do they expect a reduction of service standards in the health care, child care or telecommunications sectors, areas where women form significant proportions of both workers and consumers. Though they anticipate some job loss in certain areas of agriculture where women workers predominate -- specifically, the production and processing of soft fruits and vegetables -- they expect women in general will benefit from the expanded economy they foresee as a result of the FTA. They see much of this benefit coming through better jobs in an expanded service producing sector, an area where the majority of workers are female.

LABOUR PERSPECTIVES

Literature written from the perspective of labour, and interviews with representatives from labour organizations, show an expectation of negative impact on women from the FTA. Labour representatives predict significant job loss in clothing manufacture and in the production and processing of soft fruit and vegetables, and some job loss in data processing, all sectors where a high percentage of the workforce is female. These respondents also suggest that interaction between the FTA and provincial privatization and deregulation initiatives may result in a deterioration in the quality of health care, child care and telecommunications services, in the potential for unionization, and in the maintenance of good working conditions and workplace standards. They consider that this deterioration will have a negative impact on women, as workers and as consumers.

Both business and labour are concerned that the FTA could reinforce recent General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) rulings on fish processing and the pricing of imported beer and wine, resulting in job loss for women and men employed in these industries.

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE OPPORTUNITIES

Although it is difficult to achieve a consensus of opinion through the literature reviewed and the views expressed by the respondents, some common ground emerges. Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) presents opportunities to enhance the positive impacts and mitigate the negative impacts of the FTA on women in British Columbia through the retraining of women who might otherwise never have the opportunity to upgrade their educational and employment-related qualifications. Women workers who are displaced through the FTA require TAA appropriate to their specific needs, as defined by their previous levels of skill and education, and by their social and economic characteristics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the information in this study, the following recommendations are made:

1) that the governments provide retraining and adjustment programs for women in British Columbia who suffer job loss because of the FTA, taking into account such factors as location, current skills, mobility factors, cultural background and employment goals of those women requiring TAA;

2) that such programs be provided through a co-operative effort of governments and groups such as major cultural groups, task groups made up of women who will be or have been affected by the FTA, and existing services such as Training Enterprise Centres, Community Futures and the Open Learning Institute.

3) that Trade Adjustment Assistance be provided to help women entrepreneurs who wish to expand their current businesses into markets made available by the FTA, and to women in the service producing sector who wish to maximize their employment opportunities through such mechanisms as skills upgrading;

4) that long-range research be undertaken to assess the use and effectiveness of this TAA programming; and

5) that government consult with labour organizations to address concerns about negative effects of the FTA.

INTRODUCTION

The Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is one of the most debated policy initiatives undertaken by a Canadian government in the 1980s. Much has been written about the Agreement and its impact on, and value for, Canadian society. British Columbia has a special interest in the implementation of the FTA since the economy of the province is predominantly resource-based and heavily dependent on exporting.

Beyond the general interest of British Columbians in the FTA, women in British Columbia have a particular interest in the impact of the Agreement. Woman who work in trade-sensitive industries facing increased competition from United States imports may be directly affected by the FTA. Women who work in the service industries may also be affected. Beyond this basic impact on women as members of the labour force, the FTA will also affect women as mothers, spouses, consumers, caregivers and citizens involved in community life. Any changes to the social and economic environment in which they live will draw the attention of British Columbia's women.

1. Purpose of the Study

Impelled by the potential importance of the Free Trade Agreement for British Columbia's women, the Women's Secretariat commissioned a study to:

1) examine the potential impact of the FTA on women in the province; and

2) consider approaches to policy and program development that the government might pursue in delivering effective adjustment assistance to women.

2. Research Design

Information was collected from two complementary sources: relevant literature and an interview survey. Literature on the nature and potential impacts of the FTA itself and on Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) was selected for review. Documents examined were provincial, national and international in scope, although most cited references examine the impacts of the FTA on British Columbia. The literature reviewed was prepared by academics, federal and provincial governments, research institutes and "think tanks", business and labour organizations, and other interest groups. The literature was selected to build an information base

that accurately reflects the full range of analyses and opinions on the complex issue of free trade. (See Appendix A for details of the selection process and Appendix B for a list of references cited.)

Survey information in this report is based on interviews with representatives from business, labour, government, education and research in British Columbia. Those interviewed were selected on the basis of their involvement in the free trade debate or their expertise in TAA policy and program development. Their responses and predictions are important, since these people will influence the reactions of business and labour to economic and social change occasioned by the Free Trade Agreement. (See Appendix C for method of selection and Appendix D for list of respondents.)

3. Background to the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement

The stated purpose of the FTA is to improve Canada's access to United States markets. Approximately 75 per cent of Canada's exports go to the United States; 80 per cent of Canada's imports come from the U.S. (Economic Council of Canada, 1988: 3). Statistics for British Columbia show that the economy of this province also depends heavily on trade with the U.S. One in five B.C. jobs depends on exports. On average, more than 23 per cent of the total goods produced in the province are exported; the value of exports in 1987 was nearly $16 billion (Government of British Columbia, 1988 b). Lumber, coal, pulp and newsprint account for 63 per cent of these exports; copper, aluminum ingots, machinery, telecommunications equipment, fibre optics, and electronic and other manufactured goods make up the remaining 37 per cent (Government of British Columbia, 1988:78). Forty-eight per cent of these exports go to the United States. Only 26 per cent go to Japan, B.C.'s next largest external market.

Canada is the largest single trading partner of the United States. Twenty-five per cent of American exports go to Canada, a proportion significant enough to encourage the United States to maintain positive trade relations with Canada -- especially now, when the United States is facing strong protectionist trends in other important international markets.

The recent growth of American protectionism was a critical impetus motivating Canada to negotiate the FTA. Protectionist measures such as those imposed in the shakes-and-shingles dispute and the passage of the U.S. Omnibus Trade Bill, have heightened Canada's awareness of her vulnerability to United States trading practices. The strong trading patterns between Canada and the United States have

resulted in concern in both countries about the nature of their trading relations. Canada, however, seems to be more vulnerable to protectionist trade practices such as high tariffs or countervailing duties and might benefit more from a secure and expanded market between the two countries.

If Canada is to benefit from the FTA, several conditions must be met:

1) The content and application of the Agreement must be effective in removing tariff barriers, and in protecting Canada from non-tariff trade barriers.

2) Canadian businesses in trade-sensitive areas must be able to take advantage quickly of the heightened competitiveness of the business environment.

3) The labour market must adjust effectively to changes in demand for labour. Smooth adjustment is certain to require that government assist workers affected by changing trading patterns.

The question of whether these conditions can be met is subject to much debate, but the need to maintain positive trade relations between Canada and the United States is generally accepted.

4. Content of the Free Trade Agreement

The federal government has stated clearly that the FTA is expected to eliminate trade barriers between Canada and the United States, strengthen the Canadian economy, reduce consumer prices and create jobs. As the FTA text overview states:

> ...the economies of both countries will grow and prosper. (The FTA) will add significantly to economic growth, income and employment in Canada. Canadian business will become more competitive.... Canada will become a stronger, more confident country.... It will mean a richer Canada (Government of Canada, 1988a:1).

The Agreement contains three essential elements:

1) Removal of tariff barriers. The elimination of tariffs is expected to increase competition for Canadian or American producers of goods who formerly were protected by tariffs against comparable imported goods. Tariff reduction or elimination should also reduce the price of imported goods

that were previously subject to tariffs.

2) Provision of the rights of national treatment and national establishment to nationals of the other country. Under this provision, neither country may discriminate against business based in the partner country through any new law, regulation or requirement affecting investment.

3) Establishment of the Binational Dispute Settlement Mechanism. This is a beginning step on the difficult and complex path of resolving trade disputes between Canada and the United States. The Mechanism is intended to provide an appeal process that is quicker, less expensive and more objective than that which currently exists under domestic appeal processes, domestic judicial review or appeals under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Each of these elements is essential to the achievement of the goals stated for the FTA. Tariff removal is intended to enhance the production and marketing power of each country. The provisions for national treatment aim at making investment easier. The Dispute Settlement Mechanism has been framed to ensure that the markets of each country remain securely available to those in the other country.

Section I: WOMEN IN THE BRITISH COLUMBIA LABOUR FORCE

Any difference in the impact of the Free Trade Agreement on men and on women in British Columbia will depend, in part, on how women's participation in the labour force differs from that of men. A profile of the provincial labour force indicates that women have differing rates, patterns and concentrations of labour force participation. An overview of the British Columbia labour force appears in Table 1.

1. LABOUR FORCE PROFILE

Government statistics show that 55.3 per cent of all women in British Columbia are in the labour force; they make up 44 per cent of the total provincial labour force (Government of Canada, 1988c). Women are increasing participants in the labour force; the female labour force has grown by 12.1 per cent in the last five years, compared to a 3.6 per cent increase in the male labour force (Government of British Columbia, 1988:38). Nearly 30 per cent of women workers, compared to just under nine per cent of men, work part time (Government of Canada, 1989). Some 63.5 per cent of women, compared to 53.7 per cent of men, have held their present jobs for five years or less (Government of Canada, 1989).

On average, women in British Columbia's labour force earn 66.7 cents for every dollar earned by men in the labour force. Women have a slightly higher rate of unemployment, at 11.1 per cent in 1988, compared to 9.8 per cent for men (Government of Canada, 1988c).

Women workers are concentrated in a narrow range of occupations. Some 88.6 per cent of women employed outside the home work in the service producing sectors of the economy, while just 11.4 per cent work in the goods producing sectors. Comparative figures for men show 62.3 per cent in the service producing sectors, 37.7 per cent in the goods producing sectors. Over 55 per cent of employed women, compared to just 15 per cent of men, hold clerical or service jobs. Of the women who work in the goods producing sectors, 54.7 per cent are employed in manufacturing, concentrated in trade sensitive areas such as food processing, the manufacturing of clothing and textiles, and electronics assembly (Government of Canada, 1988c).

A more detailed profile of women workers in the two major divisions of the economy follows. It should be stressed that statistical information showing such details as educational level, job responsibility level and skill level of jobs within a sector for

women workers is not available. Non-statistical information in the sector profiles and throughout the report is based largely on the perceptions of industry and union respondents cited later in this study.

i) Women in the Service Producing Sector

As in other industrialized societies, the service producing sector* in Canada is the most rapidly growing sector of the economy. Approximately 582,000 women and 531,000 men were employed in the service producing sector in British Columbia in 1988 (Government of Canada, 1989). The majority of women in this sector occupy jobs with moderate skill and low responsibility levels. Many have a narrow range of employment history, having remained in the same type of work for most of their working lives. They usually face no language or cultural barriers to work force participation. In general, they have higher educational levels than women in the manufacturing/processing sector.

ii) Women in the Goods Producing Sector

In 1988, some 76,000 women were employed in British Columbia's goods producing sectors. Of these, approximately 60,000 worked in food processing, manufacturing and agriculture. Though women do not form the majority in most of these areas, they do fill a high proportion of lower skilled and less secure jobs. Women in these sectors are generally not unionized; they are paid significantly less than unionized workers in the same occupational categories (Government of Canada, 1988c).

Forty per cent (16,000) of British Columbia's agricultural workers are female. Women in this industry are usually concentrated in lower-level jobs, often in harvesting, and are usually paid on a piece-rate basis.

* The service producing sector is the tertiary sector of the economy, and includes everything not in the goods producing sectors (agriculture, forestry, mining, manufacturing, construction, etc.) Within the service producing sector are such areas as government services, retail trade, financial services and transportation and communication.

The clothing industry employs approximately 10,000 workers in British Columbia, 85 per cent of them women. In general, they are production workers, not supervisors. Their jobs tend to pay poorly, to entail little responsibility and to provide little job security.

Labour force figures for the fish processing industry are not available. The union representative cited later in this study estimates that approximately 40 per cent of the 6000 workers in this industry are women. Male workers in this sector are often employed as fishermen or in supervisory jobs; women are most often employed in fish cleaning and canning.

Many of the women who work in manufacturing and processing tend to have similar socio-economic characteristics, including low levels of formal education and poor English-language skills. Many are new to Canada and unfamiliar with Canadian culture. Their cultural traditions may limit their ability to pursue education or other training opportunities outside their home or immediate geographic location.

2. FREE TRADE AND THE FEMALE LABOUR FORCE

The profile of the female labour force in British Columbia suggests that any negative impact that results from the Free Trade Agreement may be most severe for women in the labour force. Studies show that workers with low educational levels and short job tenure have a much greater chance of job loss than those with higher levels of education and longer job tenure (Government of Canada, 1988d). Those who work part time or in jobs with low skill levels are also at risk. A higher percentage of women than men workers fall into these categories. Workers in these categories also have less chance to build up credits for Unemployment Insurance or other job-related benefits. Women workers who carry the main financial and social responsibility for child care will be especially hard-hit by job loss.

In evaluating the potential impact of the FTA, it is clear that special attention must be paid to the economic and social conditions of women in the British Columbia labour force, and to the role of government in developing effective policies and programs for adjustment assistance.

Table 1: British Columbia Labour Force, by Industry

	Men		Women		Total	
	(000's)	(%)	(000's)	(%)	(000's)	(%)
Service Producing						
Services	201	37.9	333	57.2	534	48.0
Finance	37	7.0	59	10.1	95	8.5
Commerce/Trade	151	28.4	127	21.8	278	25.0
Transportation/ Communication	89	16.7	26	4.5	115	10.3
Public Admin.	53	10.0	37	6.4	91	8.2
TOTAL	531	100.0	582	100.0	1113	100.0
Goods Producing						
Primary Agriculture	24	7.6	16	21.3	40	10.2
Other	57	18.2	7	9.3	64	16.5
Manufacturing	141	44.9	41	54.7	182	46.8
Construction	92	29.3	11	14.7	103	26.5
TOTAL	314	100.0	75	100.0	389	100.0

Section II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Information in this study derives partially from a review of literature that has examined the potential impacts of the Free Trade Agreement on the Canadian and British Columbian economy. The process for selection of relevant literature is described in Appendix A. Documents referred to in the text are listed under "References Cited" in Appendix B. A synthesis of literature reviewed is presented below, in terms of the three central elements of the FTA:

1) tariff removal;

2) national treatment and rights of national establishment; and

3) the Binational Dispute Settlement Mechanism.

1. Potential Impact of Tariff Removal

Examination of the literature reveals that the answers to three central questions shape the potential effects of tariff removal:

i) Will Canadian producers whose domestic markets were protected by tariffs continue to be competitive once tariffs are removed?

ii) What will be the effect on jobs if these companies cannot compete successfully?

iii) What effect will increased competition have on consumer prices?

i) Tariff Removal and Canadian Competitiveness

The Overview of the FTA published by the federal government states that Canada-United States trade is "the largest and most important trading relationship in the world" (Government of Canada, 1988a:1). In its publication on the FTA and women, the government says that:

> Canadian women will benefit significantly from the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. As workers, entrepreneurs and consumers, women are major contributors to the Canadian economy and can expect a substantial share of the opportunities and benefits generated by free trade (Government of Canada, 1988b:1).

According to the literature reviewed, the Canadian business community in general expects a moderate improvement in the economy as a result of the Agreement. The position of the Economic Council of Canada expresses this clearly:

> Our analysis shows that reductions in trade barriers between Canada and the United States would give a modest, but significant, boost to the growth in incomes, output and productivity over the longer term (Economic Council of Canada, 1988:ix).

Those who expect positive impacts from the FTA maintain that the removal of tariff barriers will provide a definite boost to the Canadian economy as expanded access to U.S. markets results in increased production, more jobs and lower consumer costs. They recognize that such expansion depends on Canadian business becoming more productive and competitive in marketing in order to take advantage of new opportunities. The president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business emphasized this necessity in his presentation to the parliamentary hearings on the FTA:

> It is our view that the adjustments small and medium size firms will have to make over the next ten years as a result of changing technology and increasing competition from newly industrializing countries will be more severe than any adjustments that will be required as a result of a lowering of Canada's trade barriers with the United States. The new bilateral trading arrangements will, however, enable small business to cope with the forces of change from a position of strength (Canadian Federation of Independent Business, 1987, as quoted in the Report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade, p. 43).

In contrast, other literature reviewed shows that labour organizations such as the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Canadian Labour Congress, social action groups such as the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and the National Anti-Poverty Organization, and some individual policy analysts, expect that the removal of tariff barriers will have significant negative effects on producers of goods currently protected by tariffs. They expect an influx of less expensive U.S. goods to make locally-produced goods non-competitive in the Canadian market. One research team summarizes the case:

> The losers are easily identified: food processing, furniture, textiles, clothing, leather goods, footwear, plastics, paper products and household appliances. Though American firms are not necessarily world leaders in these sectors, the preferential treatment afforded them under the deal should allow U.S.-based firms to take market share from Canadian firms

and undercut third country competition as well (Cameron and Mackenzie, 1988:119).

Although detailed statistical data are not available, respondents suggest women form a large proportion of the work force in goods producing industries such as food processing, and clothing and textile manufacture. If this perception is accurate, any negative impact from the FTA in these areas would hit women particularly hard.

Agricultural producers have an additional element of concern about competition with United States producers under the terms of the FTA: the role of agricultural stabilization programs and supply management marketing boards. The president of the Canadian branch of a large multinational food processing firm outlines the anticipated hazards implicit in the FTA:

> With the competitive impact of lower-priced raw food and processed products from the United States...we face the danger that price and supply mechanisms will be forced out of existence.... For the food processor, moreover, whether the company is a multinational or Canadian-owned, dismantling tariff barriers will force sourcing of either raw materials or finished processed products from the lowest cost supply point.... Food processors in Canada, faced with reducing their own prices by 10 per cent in order to compete with tariff-free American imports, would put substantial pressure on Canadian farm-gate prices. Farm rationalization would then follow inevitably, with some farm commodities phased out as rural populations and agricultural land prices decline.... An arbitrary acceleration of [rationalization] without carefully planned social adjustments could mean abandoned farms, ghost towns and villages, and a reduced rural base (Grant, 1987).

Women have worked very hard to obtain recognition of their role as equal partners in the family farm (CACSW, 1987). Some commentators suggest that these additional pressures will intensify the struggle to maintain the financial security and independence of the family farm.

ii) Tariff Removal and Job Loss or Gain

Discussion in the literature often relates the issue of Canadian competitiveness to job loss or gain. Some writers suggest that a net increase in jobs will result if Canada becomes more competitive, richer and economically stronger, as predicted by the federal government and others. Those anticipating a net increase

of jobs in Canada include the Federal Department of Finance, which estimates an increase of 120,000 jobs by 1993; the Economic Council of Canada, which predicts 250,000 new jobs by 1998; and the Conference Board of Canada, which estimates 150,000 new jobs by 1997. The British Columbia government has predicted an increase of about 27,000 new jobs in British Columbia over the next ten years (Government of British Columbia, 1987). There appears to be general agreement that the service producing sector will experience the greatest increase in jobs:

> The service producing sector is expected to be the chief beneficiary of the employment growth accompanying free trade.... Employment growth in the service producing sector would be derived largely from...indirect effects of trade liberalization. That is...service industries would benefit from increased spending and investment by Canadian consumers and businesses, who would have more income available as a result of the economic expansion [from] free trade (Macmillan, 1987:17).

Macmillan addresses the implications of this for women and their jobs:

> On the employment side, the job gains arising from free trade will vastly outweigh any losses that will occur. Most of the new jobs created will be in the service industries, where female employment is already heavily concentrated.... The major achievement of a free-trade agreement with the United States would be the replacement of poor jobs in protected industries with better jobs in expanding sectors (Macmillan, 1988b:118).

Those who foresee significant job loss resulting from implementation of the FTA focus on the manufacturing, food processing, and agricultural sectors. They also expect major job losses in the data-processing field as a result of the increasingly competitive business environment (Cohen, 1987a:58). Although quantitative data are not available, industry perception is that women form a major part of the work force in these sectors, especially on the lower rungs of the occupational and pay ladders. An expected increase in the number of service jobs, a major trend in the labour market for several decades, is seen as a mixed blessing, because it could occur largely at the lowest pay and skill levels, and entrench women at these levels.

iii) Tariff Removal and Changes in Consumer Prices

The literature shows the same difference of opinion on the subject of consumer prices: some writers expect decreases, while others do

not. Some who expect prices to go down pay particular attention to the benefit a decrease would bring for women. One of the analysts for the C.D. Howe Institute states:

> The consumer gains arising from free trade are particularly relevant since women generally spend a greater share of their income on basic necessities, the prices of which are often higher as a result of Canadian tariff and non-tariff barriers (Macmillan, 1988b:117-118).

In a publication of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, however, an analyst writes:

> Prices are <u>not</u> going to fall. Consumer choices are likely to be reduced as Canadian firms go out of business. And, when it comes to income, it is hard to believe that wages will be any higher for a Canadian worker who is either unemployed or trying to compete with the no-minimum-wage States of the American south (Miller, 1988:52, emphasis in the original).

Even those who anticipate largely positive effects from free trade question whether this particular Agreement will result in lower consumer prices. In an elaboration of the presentation made by the Consumers' Association of Canada to the Parliamentary committee on free trade, the president of the CAC states:

> ...free trade is one thing, the free trade agreement between Canada and the United States is another.... CAC's support for [the FTA] is limited because the consumer benefits, based on all projections including the federal Government's, are very small (Robinson, August 3, 1988: A-7).

2. Potential Impacts of the Extension of National Treatment and the Rights of National Establishment

The second important element of the FTA that is widely reviewed in the literature and strongly debated in terms of its potential impact is the extension of national treatment and rights of national establishment to each country by the other. Of central importance in the debate is whether social programs, income insurance, regional development subsidies and health and workplace standards will be affected by the FTA.

Some writers insist the content of the Agreement poses no threat to these Canadian programs and policies, federal or provincial. In a publication of the C.D. Howe Institute, two of the most-cited supporters of the Agreement maintain that "...the agreement leaves

Canada free to develop and to continue its own distinctive policies in all of the important areas that go to the heart of nationhood" (Lipsey and York, C.D. Howe Institute, 1988:27). The Economic Council of Canada is equally emphatic about its interpretation of the relationship between the FTA and social programs:

> [The FTA]...must clearly identify areas of policy,...that are non-negotiable....[and] that are beyond the reach of countervailing action. By that, we had in mind Canada's social policies, as well as the cultural institutions and programs used to promote regional growth and opportunity. These were, in fact, excluded from the agreement (Economic Council of Canada, 1988:27, emphasis in original).

However, some organizations, particularly those in the labour and social action fields, do expect the FTA to affect Canadian social programs and policies. They predict that the extension of national treatment and rights of national establishment to United States firms operating in Canada will have a negative impact on these policies and programs. Spokespersons for most unions, and a number of social welfare, environmental and cultural groups predict that Canada will be pressured into amending a wide range of economic, social and cultural standards currently maintained. Among the areas that they suggest will be most seriously affected are tax levels, wages in trade-sensitive sectors, environmental and health and safety standards, social programs such as Unemployment Insurance and regional development subsidies, and standards for Canadian content in the production and marketing of a broad range of cultural materials. These changes are expected to result if investors from the United States are successful in convincing Canadian governments that the lower standards that prevail in the United States should be approved for American operations in Canada.

One policy analyst outlines this perspective:

> There are two categories of danger for Canadian social programs [in the FTA]. One is that certain programs, particularly those providing income or income in kind, could be regarded by the Americans as subsidies to business in this country, leading to the imposition of countervailing duties.
>
> The other is that some social measures, particularly labour standards of various sorts, will be eroded as a result of Canadian business insisting that it cannot meet American competition if its costs are higher than those across the border (Shifrin, 1988:22).

Given the competitive advantage that companies in the United States are said to have partly as a result of their lower labour costs,

limited social benefit programs and greater economies of scale, commentators with this point of view expect that Canadian producers will be under considerable economic pressure to reduce expenditures by lowering wages and reducing benefit contributions. In this scenario, Canadian businesspeople would petition the federal and provincial governments to reduce business costs by lowering tax rates. An economist with the Canadian Labour Congress explains:

> The trade deal will affect our personal and corporate taxes indirectly. The impact will occur through the lobbying pressures of the business class within Canada who, in the name of competition, will lobby to render our personal income tax system less progressive and to lower corporate tax rates. The downward pressure in taxes will, in turn, affect our social security system (Pelletier in Drover, 1988:79).

For these writers, the potential impact on Canadian social programs and on labour standards and health standards is as important as direct impacts such as change in market share. They are particularly concerned about any measures that may further weaken women's social and economic security, since women already make up a disproportionate number of the poor, of single parents below the poverty line, and of workers with low wages and inadequate benefits (Government of British Columbia, Women in British Columbia 1971-1981).

3. Potential Impact of the Binational Dispute Mechanism on Securing Access to the United States Market

Debate over the effect of the FTA also centres around whether the Agreement actually makes Canada's access to the United States market secure from protectionist trade practices. Proponents of the FTA generally agree that the essential goal of securing access to the United States market has not been totally achieved, though they are confident that useful progress has been made. A spokesperson for the Canadian Manufacturers' Association encapsulates this viewpoint:

> What we did not get is a new set of rules, but we did get a commitment to write such a set of rules within five to seven years. We did not then fully attain our objective.... However, we have gained the important principle that the U.S. now allows another country to have a voice in the application of its trade remedy laws.... This is a valuable step forward.... It should also limit the capricious and politically motivated abuses of their system.... It is also useful to remember that the alternative of not having a voice in the application and legislating of U.S. trade is very unattractive (Canadian Manufacturers' Association, 1987:6).

A second group of commentators who support the principle of free trade, but question the wisdom of this particular Agreement, insists that an agreement with the United States must include a stronger assurance of an end to trade harassment of Canada by the United States. These writers also suggest that the central thrust of Canadian trade policy should be toward greater multilateral trade liberalization. The former executive director of the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada (the Macdonald Commission), for example, points out that this particular Agreement "does not deliver on two key issues for Canada -- binding arbitration...and a common book of rules defining unfair trade practices and subsidies." Further, he suggests that the Agreement is actually contrary to recommendations of the Macdonald Commission, which held that "multilateral negotiations were to remain the 'central theme' of Canadian trade policy.... Negotiations with the United States were to be pursued within the context of our GATT position" (Godsoe, Nov. 18, 1988:A-7).

Some groups and analysts maintain that the Dispute Settlement Mechanism will be of little practical help in securing access to the United States market. One synthesis of this position follows:

> [The Agreement]...legitimizes practices that are dangerous for Canada. By agreeing...to allow United States countervailing duty and anti-dumping law to continue to be applied in trade actions against Canadian exports, Canada has accepted the very practices that free trade was supposed to end (Cameron et al., 1988:53).

Security of access plays a key role in economic stability. The presence or absence of this security will affect women whose livelihood depends on market access.

Summary Comments

Highly divergent viewpoints emerge from literature which addresses the impact that the Free Trade Agreement will have. Some writers believe that tariff removal will result in an expanded national economy, more jobs, and lower consumer costs. They do not expect that Canada's social programs will be diminished, and they have confidence that the Binational Dispute Mechanism can, and will, protect Canada from unfair trading practices.

Other writers expect a more negative impact from the FTA. They think that Canada's competitive position will worsen, jobs will be

lost and social programs will be diminished. They doubt that the Dispute Settlement Mechanism will protect Canada's access to the United States market.

The impact of the FTA on Canadian women will depend on which of these predictions proves to be correct. If the economy expands, so will opportunities for women, though care must be taken to ensure their full participation in the wide range of opportunities. If the economy contracts, many women will be particularly vulnerable to the change because they are already in positions that leave them unprotected from an economic downturn.

Section III: BRITISH COLUMBIA VIEWPOINTS ON THE IMPACT OF THE FTA: BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT

The second major source for information in this study is interviews conducted with representatives of business, management, labour and other institutions and organizations. Opinions from business and management respondents are summarized in this section, those of labour groups in Section IV.

Business and management representatives were selected for one or more of the following reasons: their sector consistently appears in discussion of impacts of the FTA; their sector employs a significant number of women; or they have particular experience in the issue of trade liberalization. (See Appendix C for description of the selection method and Appendix D for a list of survey respondents.)

British Columbia has a distinctive economic profile, with its resource-based economy, strong entrepreneurial component, small internal market and well-established ties with markets of the western United States. All of these factors affect the perceptions that business and labour groups have of the potential impact of the FTA upon women in the province.

Discussion by business representatives on the possible impact of the FTA on women centred on the ability of British Columbia's businesses to compete locally and in the United States when tariffs are removed, on the possible effects on their business sector of the rights of national treatment and national establishment, and on the possible interaction of the FTA and rulings under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Respondents were asked to comment on how these elements might affect women in British Columbia.

1. Potential Impacts of Tariff Removal on Competition

Most of the respondents anticipate that the FTA will have a small but positive impact on the provincial economy. They expect that the removal of tariffs on Canadian exports to the United States will have little importance for Canadian companies already marketing successfully in the U.S., such as those exporting high-quality clothing, certain electronic goods and some professional services. Such enterprises have already established a market in the United States and do not expect a significant increase in their market share as a result of the FTA.

People in the businesses mentioned above expect that the FTA will streamline the movement of people and goods across the border, an important factor for both sales and product service. Employees and products must now go through time-consuming and complex procedures at border crossings. Businesspeople look forward to a reduction of this irritant, and to an increased opportunity to service their own products. The president of the British Columbia Electronic Manufacturers' Association reports that his members particularly welcome the chance to service products they sell in the U.S., because it is important for companies exporting sophisticated products to be able to provide their own long-term quality control.

Few of the business respondents expect to be negatively affected by increased competition in the Canadian market occasioned by the removal of customs duties on goods imported from the United States. The female-dominated needle trades have been identified both by those who have supported and those who have opposed the FTA as areas that will experience negative impact from the Agreement. However, the respondent from the Fashion and Needlework Trades Association reports that ongoing competition from inexpensive goods from the Pacific Rim is more of a concern than competition from the more expensive and higher-quality United States imports with which B.C. products now compete successfully. The electronics manufacturing respondent seconds this view. In these areas, imports from the United States are not seen as a threat, regardless of whether tariffs are imposed.

In general, business respondents in British Columbia are less inclined than business commentators cited in the literature review to predict job gains. Neither do they expect significant job losses. They expect that the ongoing efforts of business to streamline production and to keep labour and other costs at a minimum will buffer any impact on job gain or loss. The respondent from the Canadian Manufacturers' Association notes that, "The Agreement will create wealth, not jobs."

However, the representative of the Business Council of British Columbia suggests that the FTA could result in fewer Canadian jobs in data processing, a sector where many women find employment. She expects that the FTA will result in a more competitive environment for business in general. It is therefore possible that companies with large data-processing demands will feel pressure to do their data processing in the much larger data-processing facilities in the United States. This could be an option both for Canadian businesses and for Canadian-based branches of United States companies as they try to maintain their competitiveness.

A B.C. Tel bulletin indicates that the company expects a positive,

though minimal, direct impact from the FTA on the telecommunications industry. Since the Agreement continues to protect Canadian sovereignty over national telecommunications policy, the company expects that Canadian telecommunications companies will continue to exercise full control over their own networks and the national long-distance network. B.C. Tel considers that a competitive environment already exists in Canada for enhanced services such as data storage and retrieval, an area where the FTA encourages competition. In general, B.C. Tel expects some indirect benefits through additional jobs and opportunities in B.C. that could result from increased economic activity.

Some concern exists over negative impact on small-scale manufacturers. The Vancouver-based respondent from the Community Business and Professional Association of Canada (CBPAC) feels strongly that the FTA will result in increased entry into Canada of vertically integrated multinational corporations that look to their United States operations to supply all of their production needs for Canadian markets. Currently, some local small manufacturers of products such as dental prostheses and orthodontic appliances buy components from the U.S. and assemble and finish the products here. The products are competitive and the companies viable because of tariffs now imposed on equivalent finished products entering Canada from the United States. The removal of these tariffs is expected to allow vertically integrated firms in the United States to export the assembled and finished product to Canada at a lower price than the competing product assembled and finished in Canada. The respondent estimates that women make up some 60 per cent of workers in small assembly firms.

The CBPAC respondent also suggests that if the number of multinational firms in the province increases significantly, the increase could have social implications for the province. He believes that a resultant reduction in the number of local companies would weaken the contribution that locally-based businesses, familiar with their communities and committed to improving the local economic and social environment, make to the social and cultural life of their communities. This respondent suggests that multinational corporations would have less interest in local circumstances and issues.

Representatives from the retail industry and the respondent from the Association of Women Business Owners (many of whom are in retail or personal services) expect a positive, but indirect, impact from the FTA. They anticipate that the Agreement will strengthen the provincial economy and, because their types of business reflect rather than lead the economy of a community, they see their own business futures expanding accordingly. The current trend toward more women starting their own businesses and

succeeding in them would complement this anticipated expansion.

2. Potential Impacts of National Treatment and Rights of National Establishment

The potential impact of the establishment of national treatment and the rights of national establishment under the FTA appears in the literature review as a contentious issue. Representatives from the B.C. health care field, an area where women are the majority of the workers, were among those interviewed for this study, to determine how they expect the FTA to affect working conditions and job security. Respondents also commented on how they think the government's initiatives to privatize public services may interact with the increased competition they expect to occur under the FTA.

All respondents in the health care field are aware of the debate over the potential impact of the national treatment and rights of national establishment clauses of the Agreement. They are equally aware that the Agreement includes the management of health care services. Yet all state that the FTA is not relevant to the provision of health care. They state that it was already possible before the FTA for health care to be managed by non-Canadian firms, although this has not occurred in B.C. to any great extent.

Respondents did suggest that United States companies could seek increased penetration in areas, such as long-term care and treatment of addictions, already served by the private sector. Respondents believe, however, that the B.C. market is not large enough to warrant full-scale interest from American firms. They note that management goals and operating style in the provision of acute care are controlled by local boards, and that the Canada Health Act sets service standards. The respondent from the Health Labour Relations Board commented that, far from being wary about United States health care management practices, Canadians could learn a lot from management techniques used in the United States. More exposure to these methods could, he states, "significantly improve health care delivery here in general."

Several business respondents commented on the possibility that the FTA could indirectly affect social programs. The respondent from the Health Labour Relations Association of British Columbia expects a more buoyant economy which will generate more dollars for social programs. In contrast, the Business Council of British Columbia respondent expects that business will place additional pressure on government to harmonize corporate tax regimes, and benefit and pay packages, with the lower rates that prevail in the United States. If effective, this pressure would result in a reduction in the

amount of money available for social programs. She suggests that women, who appear to be proportionately greater users of these programs* than are men, would experience a direct, negative impact from the FTA.

3. Possible Interaction of the FTA and GATT Rulings

Some respondents suggest that passage of the FTA has added weight to recent GATT rulings and may thus reinforce the negative effects that these rulings will have on the fish-processing and brewing industries. Women make up two-thirds of fish-processing workers, and about one-sixth of brewery workers, and would feel the effect of any job loss occasioned by the GATT rulings.

Representatives from the Fisheries Council and the Brewmasters' Association of British Columbia find cause for concern in the FTA provision that requires that all GATT rulings and regulations be adhered to. They suggest that this requirement for compliance would greatly shorten the length of time which industries adversely affected by GATT rulings normally have to adjust to the rulings.

The Fisheries Council is not concerned about tariff removal under the FTA, because British Columbia imports relatively few United States fish products that could compete in the local market. Nor does the Council anticipate a significant British Columbia expansion into the United States market since B.C. fish producers are already marketing to their maximum capacity in the United States. However, the Council representative suggests that a recent GATT ruling, that fish caught in British Columbia waters need not be off-loaded or processed in the province, could have a major negative effect on the fish-processing industry. The Fisheries Council hopes to secure a new ruling that fish caught in provincial waters be off-loaded in B.C. If this effort succeeds, dockside jobs and first-stage fish processing jobs such as cleaning and gutting could be retained, but canning jobs could not. The Council expects that canning, the final stage of processing, will be replaced by freezing on factory boats or in the huge facilities along the United States coast. A small number of British Columbia processors may convert to freezing, but these operations will employ few people.

* B.C. Ministry of Health statistics show 58.3 per cent of the ministry's expenditures are spent on women; 41.7 per cent on men. Guaranteed Available Income for Need (GAIN) figures suggest that roughly 55 per cent of GAIN recipients are female.

Despite what they see as possible negative effects, the Fisheries Council remains "mildly supportive" of the FTA, because it wishes to support government efforts to reduce tariff barriers in other countries around the world where British Columbia can market fish products.

Similarly, the brewery industry representative is concerned about the additional pressure that signing of the FTA brings to bear on Canada to obey a recent GATT ruling disallowing differential taxing of imported beers. Though the brewing industry is exempt from the FTA, the respondent fears this additional pressure may result in the differential-pricing framework being removed. This change would, he suggests, result in major disruption of the brewing industry nation-wide. He expects that 30 to 40 per cent of the Canadian beer market would go to United States imports in the first year of equal pricing, and that one of the "big three" national breweries would go out of business (these interviews were conducted before two of these breweries combined to form a single operation.) The remaining breweries would shrink by 50 per cent within a very few years. He does not see a significant opportunity for Canadian brewers to penetrate the non-premium beer mass market in the United States, since the scale of production in the United States and the methods of distribution preclude a significant entry of Canadian non-premium beers.

Summary Comments

For the most part, business and management respondents expect positive impacts from the FTA. They anticipate moderate expansion of the economy, reflected in increased wealth rather than in additional jobs. Retail and service businesses that rely on a healthy economy for a healthy enterprise expect to share in this increase. In general, respondents do not expect negative impacts on social programs such as health care, and do not, indeed, see the FTA as relevant to the health care field. Some respondents express concern that pressure to become competitive under the FTA may have a negative impact on social programs that directly and indirectly affect the well-being of women.

If an economic upswing does occur in sectors such as retail sales, service to business and health care, then women in these sectors could expect to share in the economic benefits that would result. There is concern, however, that tariff removal will bring about job loss in some areas where women workers predominate. Among these are data processing and manufacturing assembly. Additional job loss is also expected if the FTA reinforces GATT rulings on fish processing and beer pricing.

Section IV: BRITISH COLUMBIA VIEWPOINTS ON THE IMPACT OF THE FTA: UNION AND EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS

Section IV presents the expectations of respondents from labour and employee organizations on the impact of the FTA. (See Appendix C for selection methods, Appendix D for a list of respondents.)

All respondents were asked to comment on the possible impact of the FTA on the economy and on women members of their organizations. In contrast to business and management respondents, labour-based respondents generally expect the FTA to have a negative impact on British Columbia's economy, on job security and working conditions, and on government social programs. Interviewees see a possible overlap between the FTA and GATT, and suggest possible interaction between the effects of the FTA and those of provincial initiatives toward privatization and the deregulation of government services.

1. Potential Impacts of Tariff Removal on Competition

Labour respondents expect the FTA to affect job security through the removal of tariffs in two important sectors: manufactured goods such as textiles; and the production and processing of soft fruits and vegetables. Industry representatives indicate that these industries employ a high, though unmeasured, proportion of women. The representatives indicate that the majority of women employed in these sectors are new to Canada, have very modest English-language skills, and have low levels of formal education. If women in these sectors lose their jobs, union respondents doubt that an equivalent number of new jobs will be created in the labour market. Thus it will be important for these women to be trained for more complex jobs requiring higher levels of literacy and numeracy. Union respondents suggest the above-mentioned characteristics of women employed in these industries will increase the difficulty of designing and delivering effective adjustment assistance to them.

The International Ladies Garment Workers' respondent expects the current workforce of 10,000, ninety per cent of whom are women, to be reduced to 1500 as a result of the FTA. Union respondents expect that local manufacturers will not be able to compete effectively when tariffs are removed on equivalent middle and lower-quality clothing imported from the United States, and will be forced to close their doors. The representative maintains that the FTA will also effectively eliminate any incentive to keep branch plants open in British Columbia. The loss of jobs from these two causes not only will cause direct wage loss for women, but also will close off a traditional route for new Canadian women to enter the British Columbia labour force.

The respondent from the Canadian Farmworkers' Union (CFU) suggests the removal of tariffs on soft fruits and vegetables from the U.S. through the FTA will force the majority of B.C. producers and processors of these products out of business. He does not believe that the "snapback"* provisions of the FTA will operate quickly and effectively enough to protect producers, especially small to medium-sized farmers. The union respondent anticipates that the removal of these tariffs will result in job loss for most of the 25,000 farmworkers and 1200 employees engaged in the production and processing of soft fruits and vegetables. He anticipates that only the very large agribusinesses, increasingly United-States-based, will survive this tariff removal. These agribusinesses are not labour-intensive, and few displaced workers could expect to find employment in them.

The CFU respondent expects that loss of jobs in the Okanagan and Fraser valleys will have an economic impact beyond these regions, because women from other regions of the province move to these farming centres at harvest time. Since it is difficult for these women to find steady employment in their home areas, the money they make harvesting is crucial to the year-round survival of their families. He expects that this pattern of regional redistribution of income will be changed by the FTA, to the detriment of some small local economies.

Labour respondents whose members are involved in information-processing expect that the FTA, together with increased privatization, will make it easier for financial institutions, government departments and Crown corporations to have their information processing done by United States companies, should they wish to do so.

* "Snapback" provisions allow a tariff to be reimposed temporarily if an agricultural producer can demonstrate that sales are being unfairly affected by the absence of the tariff. (See Chapter 7, Article 702, of the FTA for details.)

2. Potential Impacts of National Treatment and Rights of National Establishment

Respondents from health and child care, information processing, clerical areas, and telecommunications indicate their concern that heightened competition under the FTA will force management in these areas to pay more attention to costs and profits and less to the provision of high-quality services. Since many women work in these areas, respondents have special concern for women's job security and working conditions.

The day care association and health care unions expect that the national treatment and rights of national establishment provisions will increase Canada's attractiveness for American companies that specialize in child care and health care. They anticipate that companies which provide services such as long-term care and special treatment centres for addiction will move into the British Columbia market place. Labour and employee association representatives maintain that provisions of the FTA make it easier for non-Canadian companies to provide these services in Canada than under previous regulations governing multinational services. Unlike management respondents, these respondents think that both the health care and child care markets are large enough to attract American businesses, provided licensing standards are eased. Labour organizations expect that companies will pressure government to lower standards of service to enhance the profitability of private operations.

The representative of the B.C. Day Care Action Coalition, a non-profit day care providers' association, suggests that for-profit day care will appeal to private sector operators only if present day care standards such as staff/child and space ratios are lowered considerably. She expects that, if these changes occur, there will be an influx of large chain operations based in the United States. If these changes do not occur, she expects day care will continue to be provided mostly by non-profit, local groups, and that the impact of the FTA will be minimal.

Representatives from health and child care, and from the information processing, clerical and telecommunications sectors are deeply concerned about the inclusion of the management of government services in the FTA. They fear that increased competition to provide these services will interact with provincial initiatives to privatize government services. They predict that increased competition coupled with privatization will make it more difficult to establish or maintain unions in these sectors. Since unionized women on average earn more than non-unionized women, respondents fear that pressure to minimize unionization in order to become more competitive will tend to lower women's wage levels.

The Telecommunications Workers' Union (TWU) is concerned that the FTA reinforces current national and provincial pressures toward the deregulation of the telecommunications industry. The Agreement "support[s] the further development of an open and competitive market for the provision of enhanced services..." (Government of Canada, 1988:211). If enhanced services are redefined to include long-distance calling, this service could be open to competition by a number of companies. The Telecommunications Unions spokesperson suggests that in this case, the effects of the Agreement will be reinforced through deregulation and privatization. This combination of free trade, deregulation and privatization will play a significant role in promoting a serious deterioration of service to the public, particularly to the non-business customer and to people living outside the main urban areas. It will also reduce the number of jobs for telecommunications workers.

3. Possible Interaction of the FTA and GATT Rulings

The Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union respondent agrees with the Fisheries Council representative that enforcement of the GATT ruling allowing fish caught in British Columbia waters to be processed elsewhere will bring about a serious loss of jobs in British Columbia. He notes that approximately 2400 of the 5000 fish-processing workers are women, many of whom are poorly educated and lack basic English-language skills. Workers in this industry are further disadvantaged in looking for new jobs because many are located far from urban centres where more and varied job opportunities exist.

The respondent from the Brewery, Winery and Distillery Union is more optimistic than the brewery management representative about any possible interaction between the GATT ruling on beer and wine pricing and the FTA. He hopes that the wine industry can make an arrangement under the GATT or FTA to allow importation of bulk wine or concentrates from abroad for bottling locally, for pricing at local levels. This procedure is similar to that now followed in Quebec for bottling bulk French wine. He expects that jobs gained from wine-bottling will make up for jobs that may be lost in beer production.

Summary Comments

Labour and employee organizations in the sectors surveyed generally expect some negative impacts from the FTA. They anticipate that tariff removal and a more competitive business environment will result in job losses in some sectors of agriculture and

manufacturing. Union respondents representing agriculture, food processing and clothing manufacture sectors express concern that jobs will be lost because of the FTA. Competition from American producers is expected to virtually eradicate the production and processing of soft fruit and vegetables both of which have utilized a high, though statistically unmeasured, proportion of women workers. Union representatives expect that removal of tariffs on clothing imported from the United States will result in a serious loss of production jobs now held primarily by women, as Canadian firms close and American-owned branch plants repatriate.

Service industry respondents expect that the FTA and government privatization and deregulation will together result in jobs lost in data processing. They are also concerned that good public service in their industries is threatened by interaction between the FTA and privatization. Respondents suggest that possible negative effects for women will include reduced unionization, lower pay levels, diminished job security, and poorer working conditions. Some respondents also fear that business, in a more competitive environment, will pressure government to reduce current health and child care standards. They are concerned that, if the government succumbs to this pressure, services to the public in these areas will deteriorate. Women, as major consumers of these services, would suffer accordingly.

Section V: WOMEN IN BRITISH COLUMBIA AND TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE

1. Identification of Potential Impacts of the FTA on Women in British Columbia

Both the literature review and the series of interviews done for this study reveal considerable differences of opinion over the possible impacts of the FTA on the provincial economy in general and on women in particular. Those in business and management expect the Agreement will have a positive impact on the province. Those in labour organizations suggest that the Free Trade Agreement may have some negative impacts on women in specific sectors of the economy.

It is difficult to single out potential impacts of the Free Trade Agreement from those arising through other initiatives and actions, such as rulings under GATT, privatization and deregulation. It should be stressed also that information in this study is based mainly on opinions and predictions, and can be verified or refuted only by future events.

The Free Trade Agreement may open new business and employment doors for women in British Columbia. However, many commentators agree that job loss is a possibility for women who work in certain sectors of the economy. Threatened sectors include clothing manufacture, food processing, production of soft fruits, and vegetables and data processing. Respondents indicate that each of these sectors has a high proportion of women workers.

Women's work patterns in these sectors and the social characteristics of women workers in most of these industries suggest that any government assistance offered to women will require a different structure from that offered to men. Women in these sectors are concentrated in the lower skill-level and lower paying jobs. They are more likely to work part-time, and they are less likely to have long-term employment benefits that would aid them when unemployed or on retirement. They may be less able to travel for retraining or new employment because of family responsibilities and social/cultural expectations.

As noted in Section I, the characteristics of women who work in the service producing and goods producing sectors of the economy differ markedly. Those in manufacturing and processing tend to be concentrated in low-paying, low skill level jobs with little security. The skills utilized in some of these jobs are not readily

transferable. These women workers are often new Canadians, with cultural traditions that inhibit mobility and possibilities of retraining. These job and social characteristics may increase the challenges that these women face in adjusting to changes in the labour market, and that government must meet in developing effective assistance policies and programs.

Not all women employed in manufacturing and processing who may be affected by the FTA exhibit the social characteristics described above. A typical female brewery worker, for example, is middle-aged, born in Canada and has a secondary school education. The chief obstacles to her adjustment to a changing labour market will be her level of education, her narrow job experience and possible discrimination against middle-aged workers. Effective adjustment assistance can address these problems.

2. Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

Trade Adjustment Assistance programs are designed to provide financial help, training and re-employment assistance to workers, and technical assistance to firms and industries, to help them cope with any adjustment difficulties that may arise from increased import competition. Through TAA, the government can help those working in an industry affected by a measure such as the Free Trade Agreement.

Under TAA, the government can aid companies or workers affected by the FTA. Trade Adjustment Assistance can be offered to those expected to benefit from the FTA. For example, the government could assist women in providing services to business to identify a United States market or plan for expansion. TAA can also be used to help retrain or re-establish workers who suffer job loss because of the FTA.

Three criteria are generally used to evaluate labour market adjustment assistance: equity, efficiency and effectiveness, and political support-building.

The criterion of equity related to TAA and the FTA rests on the question of whether it is possible to identify workers who lose their jobs primarily because of the FTA, and whether it is fair to target assistance to workers who suffer negative impacts from changes in trading patterns and not to others who lose their jobs for other reasons.

Efficiency and effectiveness are measured in terms of whether the time and money spent on assistance programs result in a significant number of dislocated workers finding comparable employment. Thus,

> ...adjustment [is] a process for upgrading workers' skills in order to improve opportunities for obtaining a wage commensurate with the previous one. [It is] more than simply any employment (Charnovitz, 1986:158, emphasis in original).

Public support is essential to the long-range success of any major governmental policies and programs. Successful political-support building relates directly to the achievement of equity and efficiency. If a policy can be seen to be fair in its targeting and efficient in its implementation, governments can expect increased public support for the original trading initiative -- in this case, the FTA.

In considering the provision of TAA, it is essential to place labour market adjustment -- to which TAA is one possible response -- in its proper context. The labour market is in a constant state of adjustment, with resultant change for individual workers, companies and types of workers and companies. In Canada, five million people change their employment status every year (Carmichael, 1986:16). Women as a group have experienced major increases in labour market participation since the Second World War. Over the last ten years, women have accounted for over 70 per cent of total employment growth in Canada (CFIB, 1988:2). In British Columbia, the female labour force has grown by 12.1 per cent in the past five years, bringing female labour force participation to 55.3 per cent in 1987, compared to 76.1 per cent for men (Government of British Columbia, 1988:8).

Reasons for job loss and gain are many: technological change, changing sources of energy, changing consumer tastes, changing preferences of workers for various kinds of work. Governments may choose to play a role in facilitating these changes, or may decide to let market forces operate without intervention. Government assistance programs such as Unemployment Insurance, regional development grants, subsidies and tax relief for businesses are all means whereby a government can shape the economy and enhance the security of workers and businesses. TAA comes into play when a government decides to exercise its right to facilitate positive adjustment of workers or businesses who have been affected by changing trading relationships, usually when those changes have been brought about through specific government actions such as new trading agreements.

3. TAA for Women in British Columbia: Directions for the Future

Government Trade Adjustment Assistance programs present an opportunity for government to assist women who may be affected positively by the FTA, by helping them move further ahead. The programs can also be used to help those who may suffer negative effects, by helping them to acquire new skills and obtain new jobs.

Potential benefits of the FTA include an expanding market leading to opportunities for business expansion. This expansion would benefit at least two groups of women. One group is made up of women at the upper ranges of skills and experience, who have extensive training in their field and who may be independent businesswomen and entrepreneurs. These women -- including such people as human resources managers, business owners who provide services to other business, and women who have money and skills to invest -- could be helped through TAA programs to expand effectively and to find and service a larger market.

Some recent figures suggest that women are entering the small business sector at a greater rate than men, and that the small businesses they create provide additional employment opportunities for women. These statistics also suggest that businesses operated by women have a higher four-year success rate than those operated by men. (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1988). Government can reinforce these trends by providing professional businesswomen or female entrepreneurs with help in expanding their businesses, through such mechanisms as aid in locating markets in the United States, or training for additional staff required to serve the larger market.

The second and larger group that would find benefits in an expanding economy under the FTA is made up of support workers in the service producing sector. Included here are retail salespersons, clerical workers, hospitality industry workers and cleaning and maintenance workers. TAA programs could provide training for these workers, to enable them to move into different or more responsible and higher-paying areas of the expanding service producing sector.

In the event that job loss does result from the FTA, or from its interaction with other international and government actions, TAA could be provided for women workers in the female-dominated industries of clothing manufacture, food processing and soft fruit and vegetable production, and in data processing. Using retraining and education received through TAA, these women could move on to new, and possibly better and more secure, jobs.

The literature on the effects of changing trade patterns makes it clear that women are among the groups most likely to need Trade Adjustment Assistance:

> ...trade-affected industries employ, proportionately, more members of economically disadvantaged groups -- women, minorities, older workers and people at or below the poverty line. These characteristics tend to reduce the job mobility of trade-affected workers, both in a geographical and in an inter-industry sense, and to increase the social and private costs of adjustment to changes in trade (Aho and Bayard, 1980:359-60).

To a great degree, this survey of perspectives on the potential impact of the FTA on British Columbia women supports this point of view.

Summary Comments

Though no conclusive picture can be drawn of the probable impact of the FTA on women in British Columbia, it seems likely that the Agreement will result in positive effects for some women and negative effects for others. TAA programs can effectively be put into place for both. Businesswomen who wish to expand in new markets made accessible through the FTA, who wish to acquire new skills that will enable them to take advantage of better job opportunities, and women who may lose their jobs because of changing labour market conditions could all benefit from TAA programs. Assistance to those who suffer negative impacts such as job loss will need to take into account the language skills, cultural barriers, limited financial and work experience, family responsibilities, geographic isolation and lack of mobility common to women who work in certain areas of the economy. Assistance, in the form of retraining and education, can help women who have worked in jobs offering low pay and little security to move on to new opportunities in an expanding economy.

Section VI: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although it is difficult to reach a consensus of opinion on precisely how the Free Trade Agreement will affect women in British Columbia, it is apparent that there will be both positive and negative impacts. Among the positive effects are an expanding trade market in the United States and a correspondingly greater potential for women entrepreneurs and women who operate small businesses in British Columbia. The negative effects will be felt by women who work in industries such as agriculture, some aspects of manufacturing and data processing, where job loss is anticipated.

Trade Adjustment Assistance can be used to enhance the positive effects and mitigate the negative effects of the Agreement for women in British Columbia.

TAA can help women in small business -- an area where women are establishing themselves with increasing success -- to expand their markets and thus their businesses, providing in turn additional employment for other women. TAA can also provide retraining programs for women who wish to take advantage of new opportunities in a changing labour market. Such programs can help women climb out of low level service producing sector jobs into areas where they can earn higher pay and assume greater responsibility.

Trade Adjustment Assistance will be a definite factor in transforming the negative impacts of job loss into positive opportunities for women who have traditionally been confined to low-paying, low-security employment. Through retraining and education programs geared to their socio-economic characteristics, women who are displaced through the impact of the FTA can find new opportunities that bring them greater financial rewards, better job security and greater possibilities of advancement.

RECOMMENDATIONS: DIRECTIONS FOR TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA)

To meet the needs of British Columbian women, an extensive province-wide, co-ordinated effort is required. The government can build quickly and imaginatively on existing labour market adjustment policies and programs. What is accomplished for women workers affected by changing trade patterns can set an example of what can be done for other workers facing the ongoing problems of labour market adjustment which are normal in every industrialized society. The following recommendations will assist in designing an effective TAA program for these women workers:

1. In areas where a negative impact is expected from the FTA, that the government provide retraining and adjustment programs for women in British Columbia, taking into account:

- potential new job opportunities;
- geographic location of women needing assistance, to make sure women in remote regions can receive effective TAA;
- geographic location of job possibilities;
- current English-language skills and possible upgrading of those skills;
- current employment skills;
- ethnic and cultural background of recipients and resultant limitations on teaching content and ability to travel or relocate for other work;
- economic status of the woman as an individual and as a family member as it relates to training costs; and
- employment interests and long-term goals of recipients.

2. The governments undertake design and implementation of TAA for women as a co-operative enterprise with all existing resources. Included in these resources are groups and services such as:

- major cultural groups;
- task groups made up of women who will be or have been affected; and
- existing services such as Training Enterprise Centres, Community Futures and the Open Learning Institute.

These agencies are able to draw upon local resource people, have experience in designing community-based programs and have an up-to-date knowledge of local economic conditions and access to information about job availability. The well-established provincial distance education network, with access to recent technologies and methods of curriculum design and delivery and a record of providing high calibre training, would be a valuable partner in this enterprise. The government might also consider maintaining the issue of the needs of women in adjustment as a standing agenda item on all adjustment committees.

3. In those areas where a positive impact is expected, that the government assist women to maximize their employment opportunities

and avoid entrenchment in lower level positions. This can be accomplished through such mechanisms as courses in skills upgrading and identification of options, such as entrepreneurship and small business, for women in or wishing to enter the business world.

4. Long-range research be undertaken to assess the use and effectiveness of TAA programming. Research could centre on carefully selected groups of female employees who had suffered negative or positive impacts from the Free Trade Agreement and who were offered Trade Adjustment Assistance for comparison with control groups who were not offered, or did not take advantage of, TAA. This research would provide a knowledge base to be used as a foundation for the development of policy and programs for labour market adjustment in the long run. The research could have not only provincial, but also national and international implications.

5. The government work co-operatively with union leaders and labour representatives to discuss the Free Trade Agreement and to address their concerns about the possible negative impacts of the FTA.

APPENDIX A: SELECTION OF MATERIALS FOR LITERATURE REVIEW

Materials were selected for use in this study if they:

1) represented a significant element in the broad spectrum of debate on the content and potential impact of the FTA; and

2) drew on data sources that are generally accepted to be credible (e.g. Statistics Canada). See Appendix B for complete list of resources.

Among the contributors represented in the literature survey are the Economic Council of Canada, the C.D. Howe Institute, the Canada West Foundation and the Conference Board of Canada; the federal Department of Finance and the provincial Ministry of Economic Development (now the Ministry of Regional Development and Ministries of State).

Labour organizations, and policy advisory and action groups that have national memberships, or which work to represent the views of national constituencies, have studied and written on the Agreement and its impact. The literature review included publications from labour organizations such as the Canadian Labour Congress and national and provincial labour unions; policy advisory bodies such as the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women and social action groups such as the Canadian Council on Social Development.

Organizations representing the business community have also published their assessments of the FTA, many of which were included in the literature review. Among those writing on the issue were the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and the Canadian Independent Computer Services Association.

Individual researchers and policy analysts have devoted considerable attention to the FTA, extending the scope of the debate through research documents, position papers, books and articles. This material was included wherever possible.

The complexity of the Agreement, the fact that it will be phased in over ten years, and the fact that the FTA will not operate in isolation from other trading and financial influences make it difficult to evaluate potential impacts accurately. The review of literature on aspects of the FTA has examined a range of perspectives on these potential impacts.

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APPENDIX C: METHOD OF SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS FROM BUSINESS, LABOUR AND OTHER AREAS

Respondents for the survey were chosen to provide a balance of viewpoints on the possible impacts of the FTA, as related to women in British Columbia. As far as possible, counterparts were chosen from business and labour, to ensure even representation and the inclusion of various points of view. For example, a representative from the Fisheries Council was matched with one from the United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union, and a respondent from the B.C. Fashion and Needle Trades Association with one from the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union. Government and other respondents were selected for their knowledge of and direct involvement in the issues under consideration in this study. See Appendix D for list of respondents.

Interviews were based on a series of questions; respondents were given full opportunity to elaborate on any of the topics addressed and to bring up other related issues. The basic content of the interviews included:

1) descriptive data on the respondent and the nature of the organization represented (its membership, goals, etc.);

2) the respondent's perspective on the anticipated impacts of the FTA, in British Columbia in general and on women in their constituency in particular; and

3) respondents' views on policy and program directions for TAA for women in British Columbia.

APPENDIX D: LIST OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Business Groups and Associations

British Columbia Telephone Company
Freydis Welland, Corporate Development Manager
20th Floor, 3777 Kingsway
Burnaby
439-3974

Business Council of British Columbia
Heather Shannon (Clarkson & Gordon)
1130 - 800 West Pender Street
Vancouver
684-3384

Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses
Oksana Excell, Director of Provincial Affairs
525 - 625 Howe Street
Vancouver
684-5325

Canadian Manufacturers' Association
Blair Wilson, President
700 West Pender Street
Vancouver
685-8131

Retail Merchants of British Columbia
Mark Startup, President
1975 Maple Street
Vancouver
736-0368

B.C. Fashion and Needleworks Trades Association
Dawn Henderson, President
144 West 5th Street
Vancouver
879-9304

Association of Women Business Owners
Susan Bell, President
301 - 145 West 15th Street
North Vancouver
984-2004

British Columbia Central Credit Union
Richard Allen, Chief Economist
Creekside Drive
Vancouver
734-2511

Community Business and Professional Association of Canada
Barry Morley, Founding Director
719 W. 16th Street
Vancouver
873-4232

Fisheries Council of British Columbia
Robert Morley, Executive Director of Government Services
400 - 100 West Pender Street
Vancouver
684-6454

Brewmasters Association of B.C.
Phil Carter, Vice-president, Labatts Ltd.
976 Richards
Vancouver
669-5050

B.C. Electronic Manufacturers Association
Hugh Kay, President
P.O. Box 80062, S. Burnaby
T.H. 734-2750, H.K. 420-3313

Paul Murphy, President
Synaptec Corporation
1718 Commercial Drive, Ste. 103
Vancouver
251-5158

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Unions and Employee Associations

United Fisherman and Allied Workers Union
Jack Nichol, President
160 - 111 Victoria Street
Vancouver
255-8771

Brewery, Winery and Distillery Workers
Rick Sutherland, Business Agent
7128 Gilley Street
Burnaby
434-5155

Telecommunications Workers Union
Sid Shniad, Staff Economist
5261 Lane Street
Burnaby
437-4822

International Woodworkers of America
Clay Perry, Communications Officer
1285 West Pender Street
Vancouver
683-1117

British Columbia Government Employees Union
Linda Baker, Research Officer
4911 Canada Way
Burnaby
291-9611

Transportation Communications Union, Lodge 1804
Susan C. Szczawinski, President
608 - 1200 West 73rd Avenue
Vancouver
263-1119

British Columbia Federation of Labour (interview refused)

International Ladies Garment Workers Union
Phyllis Webb, B.C. and Alberta Manager
102 -119 West Pender Street
Vancouver
684-7577

Canadian Farmworkers Union
Sarwan Boal, President
1 - 4725 Kingsway
Burnaby
430-6055

United Food and Commerical Workers Union
Retail Clerks, Local 1518
Jack Allard, Secretary/Treasurer
5261 Lane
Burnaby
434-3101

Office and Technical Employees Union, Local 378
Anne Harvey, President
4740 Imperial Street
Burnaby
430-0378

Joy MacPhail
Labour Consultant
395 N. Kootenay Street
Burnaby

Social Services - Health

Continuing Care Employee Relations Association
Joanne Arnold, Executive Director
2024 West 12th Street
Vancouver
736-0416

Health Labour Relations Association B.C.
Robert Weston, Director of Continuing Services
300 - 1985 West Broadway
Vancouver
736-8221

B.C. Health Association
Eugene Tomasky, Vice President
Representation and Research
300 - 1985 West Broadway
Vancouver
736-8221

B.C. Association of Private Care Facilities
Ed Helfrich, Executive Director
4255 Arbutus Street
Vancouver
733-1388

David Schreck, Ph.D.
Health Economist
145 East Windsor
North Vancouver
984-8344

Health Sector Unions and Employee Associations

Hospital Employees Union
Bill Macdonald, President
2286 West 12 Street
Vancouver
734-3431

Health Sciences Association (written response to questions asked by telephone)
Peter Cameron, Executive Director
3680 East Hastings Street
Vancouver
299-2707

B.C. Nurses Union
Pat Van Horne
100 - 4259 Canada Way
Burnaby
433-2268

Social Services - Childcare/Daycare

B.C. Daycare Action Coalition
Mab Olman, Director
2855 Acadia
Vancouver
228-5343

Lower Mainland Association of Private Day Care Owners (interview refused)

Trade Adjustment/Re-training

Canada Employment and Immigration
Dr. Roslyn Kunin, Director Economic Services, B.C./Yukon
1055 West Georgia, 11th floor
Vancouver
666-2461

Dexter Wallace and Associates Ltd.
Joan Wallace, Reva Dexter
401 - 1755 West Broadway
Vancouver
731-3116

Beverly Hornett
Assistant Dean of Careers/Vocations
Capilano College
North Vancouver
986-1911

Richard Cruchley
Labour Market Services
Canada Employment and Immigration
1055 W. Georgia, 8th floor
Vancouver
666-6561

Paul Gallagher, Ph.D.
President, Vancouver City College
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